UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

Voice Studies at the University of Toronto Presents:
Händel's Esther (1718)

Featuring the Graduate Oratorio Ensemble under the direction of Dr. Darryl Edwards, and collaborative pianist Dr. Kathryn Tremills.

Monday, March 31, 2025 at 7:30 pm
Trinity-St. Paul's United Church and Centre for Faith, Justice, and the Arts

Characters

Esther	Emma MacNeil	**First Israelite**	Taline Yeremian
Israelite Woman	Wen Shan Wang	**Second Israelite**	Christian Matta
Assuerus	Enquan (Frank) Yu	**Third Israelite**	Christian Masucci-Facchini
Habdonah	Taline Yeremian		
Officer	Christian Matta	**Chorus Conductor**	Yuan (Alba) Chen
Haman	Joshua Gibson*	**Keyboard**	Kathryn Tremills
Mordecai	Christian Matta	**Cello**	Kerri McGonigle

Program

Sinfonia Coda

Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759)

Scene I

Recitative: "'Tis greater far" (Haman, Habdonah)

1. Air: "Pluck root and branch" (Haman)
   Recitative: "Our souls with ardour glow" (Officer)
2. Chorus: "Shall we the God of Israel fear?" (Chorus)

Scene II

Recitative: "Now persecution" (First Israelite)

3. Air: "Tune your harps" (First Israelite)
4. Chorus: "Shall we of servitude complain?" (Chorus)
5. Air: "Praise the Lord" (Israelite woman)
   Recitative: "O God, who from the suckling's mouth" (Israelite woman)
6. Air: "Sing songs of praise" (Second Israelite)

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

As part of the Faculty's commitment to improving Indigenous inclusion, we call upon all members of our community to start/continue their personal journeys towards understanding and acknowledging Indigenous peoples' histories, truths and cultures. Visit indigenous.utoronto.ca to learn more.

Scene III

Recitative: “How have our sins provok'd the Lord!” (Third Israelite)

7. Accompanied Recitative: “Methinks I hear the mothers' groans” (Third Israelite)
8. Chorus: “Ye sons of Israel, mourn” (Chorus)
9. Air: “O Jordan, Jordan, sacred tide” (Third Israelite)

Scene IV

Recitative: “Why sits that sorrow on thy brow?” (Esther)

10. Air: “Dread not, righteous Queen” (Mordecai)

Recitative: “I go before the king to stand” (Esther)

11. Air: “Tears, assist me” (Esther)
12. Chorus: “Save us, O Lord!” (Chorus)

Scene V

Recitative: “Who dares intrude” (Assuerus, Esther)

13. Duet: “Who calls my parting soul” (Esther, Assuerus)
14. Air: “O beauteous Queen” (Assuerus)

Recitative: “If I find favour” (Esther)

15. Air: “How can I stay” (Assuerus)

Recitative: “With inward joy” (First Israelite, Second Israelite)

16. Chorus: “Virtue, truth, and innocence” (Chorus)
17. Arioso: “Jehovah crown'd” (Third Israelite)
18. Chorus: “He comes, he comes” (Chorus)

Scene VI

Recitative: “Now, O Queen” (Assuerus, Esther)

19. Accompanied Recitative: “Turn not, O Queen” (Haman)
20. Air: “Flatt' ring tongue” (Esther)

Recitative: “Guards, seize the traitor” (Assuerus)

21. Air: “How art thou fall'n” (Haman)
22. Chorus: “The Lord our enemy has slain” (Soli and Chorus)

SYNOPSIS

Esther is a Jewish orphan who is living in the care of her relative Mordecai, a trusted advisor to Assuerus, King of Persia. Mordecai has discovered and stopped an attempted assassination of Assuerus. Haman, Prime Minister to the King, is infuriated by Mordecai’s refusal to bow down to him, while Mordecai insists he will bow only to his God. In retaliation to this rebuke, Haman orders that all Jews in Persia be killed. While Esther is hailed as the new Queen of Persia, she is shocked to discover Mordecai in mourning attire, only to find out from him that the King has followed Haman’s vengeful advice to enact the Jews’ extermination. Mordecai pleads with Esther to speak with her new husband to rescind the order. Mordecai and Esther both know, however, of the harsh penalty for first speaking with his Majesty without him first speaking is punishable by death. Esther ultimately makes the brave choice to plead for the King’s mercy by cancelling his decree because it will otherwise mean the execution of Mordecai, his trusted advisor, and Esther, his beloved wife and queen. Assuerus is tenderly persuaded and orders the lifting of his death decree. From the place where the vengeful Haman had planned to murder Mordecai by hanging, Assuerus orders the hanging of Haman instead, despite his wiles to be pardoned. The Jews rejoice that their lives have been saved; King Assuerus and Queen Esther rejoice with their people. *Esther* received such wide popularity solely from its story-singing, it led to the creation of a new art form.